

**B.2 PACIFICATION****A CONCEPT OF PACIFICATION**

by

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**THE PROBLEM**

1. The totality of Viet Cong insurgency in South Viet-Nam consists of two distinct but interrelated problems:

a) The Viet Cong military apparatus, which now constitutes a well-equipped, growing, and experienced army, and is no longer a collection of partisans. These so-called main force units now augmented by at least seven PAVN regiments are supported by an extensive and much more numerous paramilitary structure. The fighters in this structure are, from time to time, gathered as military units and committed to combat in concert with main force elements, or committed to military actions quite on their own. Let us call this entire military grouping the Viet Cong military arm.

b) The second part of the insurgency consists of those Viet Cong activists, terrorists, sympathizers, and collaborators who constitute the ever-widening and strangling web of subversion that moves out through the countryside, district by district, village by village, and household by household. The extent to which this subversive permeation of the population is successful constitutes the extent to which and the rate at which the population is being lost to the enemy. In this grouping one must include the part-time VC paramilitary fighter, when he is not gathered for an operation but is at rest and pursuing an apparently harmless and normal life in the body of the non-VC population.

2. These two arms of the Viet Cong movement, described above, constitute our enemy. It is their destruction or neutralization which comprise our immediate purpose in being in this country, in support of the South Vietnamese themselves. These two problems are sufficiently different as to require radically different methods and styles of attack. They have, however, been viewed and approached as a military challenge which would be met by a military response, with minor and peripheral support by

civilian authorities and agencies. Certainly, we on the American side have not distinguished between these two problems, and have concentrated our efforts on dealing with it militarily by the constant enlargement of the RVNAF<sup>1</sup> as an establishment directed from the national level. At the same time, much less attention has been devoted to the significance of the civil effort at the provincial and district level, where the popular pacification war is being fought.

3. In order to overcome the Viet Cong and to achieve our objective, this late in the game, four separate but interrelated efforts are essential. It is necessary that we be successful in all four. Failure in any one will endanger each of the other three, and probably bring all of our efforts to failure. These four efforts are:

a) The progressive curtailment and elimination of significant infiltration of men or materiel into SVN from areas external to it.

b) The imposition by the RVNAF, aided by Allied Forces, of its will on the Viet Cong military formations and structures as they exist in each province. With the battlefield of SVN at least practically isolated, the objective must be to destroy, capture or disperse the Viet Cong military arm.

c) The identification, subsequent harassment and ultimate neutralization of the VC political and covert apparatus that constitutes the essentially non-military structure by which the Viet Cong movement controls, coerces, and exploits the populations it dominates, and through which it carries out its subversive tasks amongst population groupings yet to be engulfed by the VC.

d) A continuing and ever-expanding GVN provincial effort beginning at the household and family level, extending up through the village and district. The objective here, working from the household unit upwards, classically is to "arm" those households and villages, by means of civic action and reasonable protection at the family level, and thus to equip them to resist or deflect VC blandishment and encroachment, to the limit of their ability to resist. In speaking of "the people" in this way, one must visualize them as existing in rural groupings ranging from a few score to several hundred. One must also envisage the goal as being the creation and sustaining, among these small groupings, of

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<sup>1</sup> Republic of Viet-Nam Armed Forces.

a collective attitude which is hostile to the VC - or if it is responsive, it is so only under VC duress. In brief the target here is the involvement of the population itself, beginning with its smallest components, in the overall commitment against the Viet Cong. This favorable environment, friendly to the GVN and poisonous to the VC can be achieved by the proper mixture of low level civic action, basic armed security, and gradually strengthening mutual confidence between GVN action teams and the families amongst whom they circulate and live. This is one of the lessons we have learned from the development of the People's Action Team<sup>1</sup> program.

4. There are several points that should be noted with regard to the four efforts mentioned in the preceding paragraph:

a) Sub-paras a. and d. above have been given the least attention to date. Given further inattention, additional effort on sub-paras b. and c. may become irrelevant.

b) It should be noted that sub-paras a. and d. are in themselves means to an end, with the end being b. and c.

5. The accomplishment of sub-paras a. and b. of para 3 are essentially military matters and clearly must be controlled and directed by the American and Vietnamese military leadership, each in its own sphere, and each subject to larger factors of a political nature. On the other hand, sub-paras c. and d. of para 3 have pretty much proved themselves to be the kind of problem with which a formal military establishment is ill-equipped to grapple. On the contrary, they constitute targets which are essentially civilian in composition and which are local in character, indigenous to the individual province, the individual district, or even at smaller sub-divisions of the population.

6. If one accepts this view of the insurgency as comprising two parts, and that these two parts produce four tasks or essential programs, then it becomes possible to think seriously and constructively about how to assign responsibilities, priorities, and resources available to the over-all task. It also becomes logical to view the first part of insurgency as one in which the GVN military component is dominant, with the civilian ministries in support. The VC main force units comprise an army in the field which must be brought down by an equivalent or greater force: the RVNAF and its allies. Equally, regarding the second part, it becomes logical to view the Ministries of Interior and Rural Construction (now called Revolutionary Development) as the dominant GVN agencies at the Saigon end, with the

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<sup>1</sup> These are sometimes referred to as Political Action Teams.

other echelons of the government being in support. Practically, the role of these ministries is in itself less important than that which is even more essential: vastly to strengthen the authority and the capability of the province chief to work on sub-para c. and d. of para 3.

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#### WHAT TO DO ABOUT PACIFICATION

8. Briefly stated, we must agree that our pacification objective is the simply-stated goal of causing the small family units which make up the rural population, to become responsive to and receptive toward the lowest echelons of local authorities with whom they are frequently in contact.

9. We must recognize that the knitting together of the population and of the government must begin at this very lowest level; by the group of families and households that make up the villages, hamlets, and the countryside in general, to the local elders and the district officials and functionaries, who constitute local authority. Contact with such local authorities, certainly at the district level, may well be the only form of officialdom that the local residents will ever be aware of. As such, it is equitable to the GVN in Saigon, about which the ordinary rural dweller knows little and cares less.

10. National and provincial institutions of popular representation must indeed be brought into being, but these accomplishments will be enduring only to the degree that the linking of the rural population to his own visible local authorities has been brought about. In saying this, it is well understood that this objective has been voiced before. It has never been achieved, however, because the actions necessary to its accomplishment were never in fact performed.

11. One of the hard won lessons of 1964 and 1965, in the civic and political action field, has been that repeated and constantly-applied low level civic action, of immediate and personal significance and value to the families concerned, rather quickly creates an atmosphere of friendliness and acceptance of the local authorities performing the actions, by the families being helped. This atmosphere established and maintained, information (intelligence) harmful to the Viet Cong and essential to GVN programs and efforts, is volunteered in an ever increasing amount. Then, as forceful action is taken against the Viet Cong locally on the basis of such intelligence, rural confidence in local authorities begins to develop, especially as the rural population continues to benefit from civic action of immediate value and impact. It is unfortunately necessary to emphasize that this civic action must in fact be done, and not simply planned and discussed in Saigon.

12. This cycle of good works leading to intelligence, thence to action beneficial to the rural households, is the cycle which, as continued, does indeed draw segments of the rural population closer to their local authorities. Our experience with People's Action Teams over the past year and a half seems to prove rather conclusively that this cycle of three elements is the only working device so far identified that indeed does accomplish this essential goal. The varying conditions in the different provinces and districts, and even within districts, require considerable latitude and flexibility in applying this doctrine. It is, however, exactly this requirement of flexibility that dictates an approach to the problem from the very lowest level upwards, rather than from the Saigon level downwards.

13. For a rural population, which has traditionally experienced callous indifference at best and more frequently thorough exploitation by its officialdom, to find this same echelon of local authorities itself taking the lead in civic action in its most basic and wanted forms - it is this experience that prepares the ground for the growth of rural response and friendliness toward their local authorities. Given this, the next phase is characterized by the volunteering of intelligence against the Viet Cong in their midst or passing through their locality. It must be recognized that if the people will give intelligence against the VC to local authorities, other forms of cooperation will come as well. Once this watershed of morale and spirit is crossed, the Viet Cong fish begins to swim in a hostile sea. This, of course, is the beginning of rural security. This also marks the beginning of the rural development which will make it possible for the bulk of the population of South Viet-Nam, once the major military actions have come to a close, to control and suppress the problems of subversion and terror which will without doubt continue for the next decade or longer.

14. This well-motivated performance by local authorities can be brought about by encouragement, example, and moral indoctrination. The techniques and devices used to train government cadre to this level of selflessness and helpfulness are known. They have been successfully employed over the last year and a half in the PAT program.

15. Once this bond begins to show itself in a locality, and the local security situation (at least in terms of Viet Cong main force units) becomes tolerable, all of the other and more formal forms of government involvement and assistance can come into play - the more formal and complex forms of medical care, educational facilities, farmers' cooperatives, union activities, teachers' associations, and the like. The original form of low level civic action should not stop, however, but should be continued even during this build-up period, until it is well established that the more formalized institutions of rural help are indeed building the foot bridge as well as the highway bridge, and are indeed teaching remotely-located children how to count as well as those able to come to the school.

16. Given a growing bond of understanding and responsiveness by a rural population to its local authorities, one moves into a phase when meaningful choices of local representation to a higher local assembly can be made. Thus, the ascending spiral of some acceptable or reasonable form of representative government can begin. Possibly this spiral may reach the national level at about the time a constitution might be agreed upon and a national representative body needed - let us say in three to seven years.

17. It is felt that the doctrine set forth above is both appropriate and necessary to the present need. The general doctrine must be applied from the bottom up and in all provinces, or at least in as many provinces as can be staffed now, with high priority given to staffing all provinces as rapidly as proper training can be accomplished.

18. To apply this general doctrine to the rural areas of Vietnam will require immediate attention to two matters. One: the matter of manpower native to the province and district concerned. It would seem inevitable and that at an early date, provision be made for this kind of effort to get its essential and proper share of the manpower resources in the countryside. Two: the role and authority of the province chief (and his subordinate district chiefs) need clarification concerning and possibly even their separation from the military line of command. Regardless of the fact that the province chief is most often a military officer, he should be fully responsible for implementation of the doctrine presented above, given the manpower and other resources necessary to its accomplishment, and made responsible to the Prime Minister or his immediate delegate for this accomplishment. There are ample means of coordinating his activities with purely military activities going on in his province and district.

### CONCLUSION

19. In implementing the doctrine presented in this paper, we must always strive to advance the truly Vietnamese character of this effort. While doing what is essential in terms of initiating, supporting and monitoring, we should avoid any appearance of assuming the leadership of this pacification effort. The growth and spread of this activity will be effective and lasting only if it develops its own echelon of Vietnamese leadership, as opposed to American leadership.

20. We must bear in mind that the basic object here is to attach the rural population to its local authorities, and to inculcate the trait of their being mutually responsive, one to the other. Long after our joint military effort has dispersed or neutralized the Viet Cong military arm, Communist subversion, terror and coercion will continue. Only a population which is inclined to support its local authorities, and local authorities which work in the interest of serving and protecting the people - only this

kind of rural environment will be able to contain or suppress such subversion. If this bond between people and local authority is not brought into being, the purely military effort, with all of its attendant losses, will have been a failure. Thus, the Vietnamese must be brought increasingly to take the lead and responsibility in this pacification effort, as rapidly as can be done without jeopardizing the effectiveness of this growing effort.

21. For only too long have we played with widely differing concepts of pacification, both on the American and Vietnamese sides. The doctrine presented in this paper is simple, derived from the needs and problems of the rural population, and effective. Its successful implementation will make possible the development of a peaceful and orderly countryside. It does not conflict with military prerogatives or tasks; rather does it supplement them. We should accept it as the basis for rural construction, and urge the GVN to adopt it as well.

#### ATTACHMENT: The PAT Program: Theory and Practice

1. Although differing local situations cause some variations in the specific content of People's Action Team actions, broadly speaking they all carry out three interrelated activities which experience has proved are essential to the success of the program. These activities may be described as:

a. Work. This means civic action at its lowest possible level and by this is meant basic and rudimentary medical help to an ill member of a family, help in repairing an enclosure for animals, repairing a path, cleaning a well, cutting a child's hair, teaching a child to count - the list is endless.

b. Information (Intelligence). From the kind of work described above grows confidence and a gradual willingness to provide information, as well as to believe information coming from local authorities.

c. Action. It has been learned that from good work at the family level comes the confidence which brings with it intelligence about the Viet Cong in the area, and on the basis of this intelligence, armed action can be taken against Viet Cong so identified or compromised. It has been learned if those who perform the work, mentioned above, are in sufficient numbers and aggressively armed, that they themselves can in many cases carry out the action by themselves, thus further increasing the confidence of the local population

in them, and further inspiring them to help. Where the intelligence so produced leads to a prospect of action beyond the capability of the workers themselves, referral to the district level can bring appropriate military units to bear upon the tactical opportunity.

2. Furthermore, it has been learned that there are four additional factors which must be constantly respected, if the above "Unity of Three" is to be successful. These factors are:

a. The work done for the small segment of rural population must be of immediate and continuing help and value to the families and households concerned, and be repetitive if necessary.

b. The work must be done essentially by the same group of activists, who must be native to the district in which they operate.

c. The work done by this repetitive group of activists must be, generally speaking, among the same segment of population, i.e., in the same district, or even in a certain portion of a district.

d. This work must be done by the same people among the same people, all the time and without end.

3. Where these factors are observed, and the "Unity of Three" employed, the activists indeed win the confidence, affection, and of even greater importance the protection of the people among whom they work and live, and on whose behalf they on occasion fight. When these principles of conduct are observed and are in fact carried out, it has been found that these activists become as one with the population whom they serve and among whom they live. Where this condition has been created, objective evidence reveals that the Viet Cong find such areas dangerous to enter.

4. In addition to the "Unity of Three," and the four factors also listed above, there are certain other characteristics which have been found to have been greatly contributory, probably necessary, to the success of the program. These are:

a. The thoroughness and intimacy of the political and motivational training given to these activists must be maintained and in no way diluted. Provision must be made for refresher courses of a political and motivational character



every three to four months. While a good portion of this training can be given in a centralized location, for purposes of efficiency and uniformity, final indoctrination and training should be given on the ground in the district in which the team will work.

b. The activists must either be native to the district in which they will work, or long associated with it, at home in it, and generally speaking, accepted by the residents of the district.

c. In spite of the armament and fighting capability of these teams of activists, they are not to consider themselves as military units, in the conventional sense, nor are they to be so viewed by the population amongst whom they work. They should view themselves, and in turn be viewed, as special civilian partisans whose work is to help the people amongst whom they live.

d. In keeping with previous sub-paragraph c., these partisan units should not have a barracks or compound which serves as their headquarters or base, nor any other such place to which a conventional military unit habitually returns. The base of these activist units is the district itself. They should sleep in places provided by the population they move among, and should purchase their meals from these same people.

e. These units, as they observe the "Unity of Three," must constantly move from point to point within their assigned district, depending on the work to be done, the intelligence received, and the action indicated.

5. The objective of the PAT program is of course to bring in to being a local popular attitude which is hostile to the Viet Cong presence and which resists its encroachment. The attainment of this objective will be characterized by such examples as the following, which are each in themselves goals:

a. A willingness to provide to local authorities information concerning Viet Cong sympathizers, collaborators, or the movement of Viet Cong functionaries or armed units.

b. A willingness to protect (by hiding, dissimulation, or warning) local authorities or those working in their behalf from Viet Cong raiding parties, terrorists groups, or other forms of Viet Cong harassment.

c. To avoid where possible paying taxes, providing food, or otherwise assisting the Viet Cong, or where avoidance proves too dangerous to the family or the immediate community; to report such action promptly to local authorities.

d. To evade serving or supporting Viet Cong main force units by flight or hiding, and promptly reporting to local authorities.

e. Normal cooperation with local authorities in low level and local civic action or self-help activities of benefit to the immediate groups of households or the population of the immediate area.

6. The above enumeration is by no means all-inclusive. It must be borne in mind that the condition and the abilities of the local population to lend themselves to this objective may vary widely from province to province, and even within individual districts. This variance will be influenced by the following factors.

a. The presence and strength of Viet Cong main force units in or near the populated area in question.

b. The degree of control or domination over the local population already exercised by the Viet Cong governing apparatus.

c. Purely local factors such as ethnic homogeneity, religious affiliation, local occupation, and availability of police at district level.

d. The degree to which there is a latent receptivity in favor of local authority, to the disadvantage of the Viet Cong.

7. It can be readily seen that once the villages begin to inform on the Viet Cong, once they begin to protect those working against the Viet Cong, and once they begin to resist Viet Cong demands, the first and critical round in the pacification struggle has been won, and the area in question is ready for "takeoff" with respect to the infusion of larger doses of economic

aid in the form of schools, local developmental projects, etc. Until this essential first round is won, we believe that it is economically wasteful, politically undesirable, and administratively chaotic to deluge small peasant communities with the overly ambitious developmental projects which unhappily have in the past far too often constituted the primary ingredient of joint U.S./Vietnamese pacification efforts.

8. As it now functions, the PAT program is managed locally by the province chief, with staff assistance covering three types of support:

a. Intelligence. It is this staff's responsibility to ensure that all reports provided to a district chief by teams within his district are funneled into the province intelligence center, for the benefit of all pacification operations within the province (with due respect to the protection of source identifications and agent names). In turn, this person has the obligation of providing to the district chief such additional intelligence as may be available and needed by a district chief in supervising or directing the "ACTION" aspects of the teams' activities within the district.

b. Civic action and government information. This staff has the responsibility of reviewing those civic actions found desirable by the partisan teams in the districts, but beyond their own capability to implement, and thereafter seeking ways and means, at the province level, of responding to the need so identified, or in otherwise giving evidence and concrete form of GVN interest in and concern for the welfare of the population at the lowest level. It is normally at this point that such civic action meshes into province civic action capabilities and plans, either on the part of the PATs themselves or in conjunction with USOM.

c. Team support. This staff has the responsibility of seeing to it that the PATs themselves receive, promptly and fully, all necessary support. This includes:

(1) Maintenance at both district and province headquarters of adequate ammunition stocks, replacement weapons, replacement clothing and such accountments.

(2) Prompt and unvarying provision of cash to district chiefs for dependable salary payments to team members.

(3) Immediate payment to district chiefs of death and funeral benefits for immediate passing on to families of those killed in action.

(4) Maintenance of contact with the families of partisan team members, in order to be aware of personal problems, sicknesses, or other matters wherein the activist's family should receive some help or attention, so as to maintain the activist's morale and confidence that the local authorities are taking an active interest in himself and his family.

9. As the PAT program expands, it is very likely that the need will become apparent for similar support staffs to be established at the district level.

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LANSDALE

(Richard Critchfield, "Assignment: Saigon,"  
The Washington Star, December 1965)

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As he settles into his job as Machiavelli-behind-the-prince to 34-year-old Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, /Major General Edward/ Lansdale becomes America's first full-fledged career revolutionary. At his disposal are plenty of dollars, a vast intelligence network, and nearly 150,000 American combat troops.

Lansdale's personal approach to his job is probably best revealed in a story he has told colleagues around the American mission. He feels the United States relationship towards South Viet-Nam, a great sovereign power helping a minor sovereign power, should be approached like a man trying to help his neighbor garden. If he just stands there and carps "that's no way to plant azaleas" his neighbor will hate his guts as a know-it-all.

Worse, he can come rushing to his neighbor's aid with a lot of gadgets that tear up the neighbor's flower bed. The third and Lansdale way is to be the "really friendly guy" who comes over, spade in hand, to work alongside the neighbor and invite him home for a cold beer when it gets too hot.